

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603

September 22, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

This week you are scheduled to travel to New York City to participate in the United Nations Climate Summit, where some leaders are gathering to discuss the development of a binding accord to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Recent reports have suggested that your Administration is considering a strategy that would establish binding targets, but without requiring consideration by the United States Senate.

This is deeply troubling. Article II, Section II of the United States Constitution clearly precludes any binding international agreement from entering into force until the Senate gives its consent to ratification. Given this, what form do you anticipate this agreement taking? Under what legal basis will you commit the United States to performing any specific actions in accordance with an international agreement without the advice and consent of the Senate?

Your Administration has consistently stated that unilateral U.S. action on global warming will be ineffective without coordinated international action. In 2009, Lisa Jackson, then-Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), responded to my question during a Senate hearing that, "U.S. action alone will not impact world CO₂ levels." Last year, current EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said essentially the same thing, "Can the EPA alone solve the problem of climate change? No, we cannot."

Despite this, your Administration's actions reveal that you will take unilateral action anyway. Your counterparts from Russia, India, China, Germany, and Australia have all announced that they will not be attending this week's summit, and last month, Australia repealed its carbon tax because of the immense cost it was having on its economy. Since then, more than 120,000 jobs have been created there. For similar reasons, Canada made the bold decision to remove itself from the Kyoto Treaty in 2011. Additionally, when that same agreement was due for its second stage of commitments, Russia and Japan declined to participate.

Political support for the development of an internationally binding agreement on global warming has completely eroded among the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters. Recognizing this, is it worthwhile to lead the nation down a path of intense economic pain to solve a 'global problem' if no other industrialized nations will follow? Do you disagree with your EPA Administrators that unilateral regulatory action will do nothing to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions? How will it be possible for the U.S. economy to accelerate its growth and expand

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opportunities if it is crippled by environmental mandates that strengthen the competitiveness of other countries by diminishing our own? These are important questions that need to be answered in light of the great cost any agreement to reduce greenhouse gases will impose on our economy, and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "James M. Inhofe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being the most prominent.

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator